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STABILITY IN KEY AREAS (SIKA) - EAST

MONTHLY REPORT JANUARY 2012

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STABILITY IN KEY AREAS (SIKA) - EAST

MONTHLY REPORT

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AECOM International Development

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BACKGROUND

This report covers activities of the SIKA-East project during the month of January 2012. During this reporting month the activities that are reported are split into three major subjects detailed below as SIKA-E Key Program Activities, GIRoA Coordination, and SIKA-E Operation and Support.

SIKA-E team during this reporting month are ready and up to speed for a quick start at the provincial and district level once SIKA-E received green light from USAID on rolling out the program to the eight pre-identified districts in four provinces of Ghazni, Logar, Paktia and Wardak. To continue AECOM home office support and commitment to the project and ensure effective and efficient transition from the start-up of SIKA-East to a normal operation phase, AECOM and AECOM partners deployed our start up team and STTAs for the operations and program tasks in the project.

SIKA KEY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

SIKA-E team gave two presentations to RC-E in Baghram on January 17, 2012. The first was intended for field staff. Many questions from the RC-E field team were responded to by SIKA-E COTR Jodi Rosenstein and SIKA-E COP John Lister. The questions were focused on when SIKA-E was going to start and when SIKA-E was going to start training. Another common refrain was how information flows would take place between SIKA-E and Chief of Mission (COM)/military personnel on the ground. Several districts called in to ask how SIKA-E was going to work in their particular district given the absence of any MRRD representation at all. An issue that caused concern was the existence of parallel DSF processes – SIKA-E (Afghanized) and the existing version at the same time.

In the second brief, Paul Folmsbee, the Senior Civilian Representative for RC(E) and Greg Huger, his deputy and the lead USAID person at the platform, and General Carl McQuillan who has the military lead on development and governance issues attended. Paul Folmsbee expressed the very valid concern that we would face obstacles dealing with the highly stovepiped Afghan ministry set ups in our districts.

District Roll-out Plan –

SIKA-E team is ready to start at the districts from recruitment to engaging key stakeholders for establishing the primary communication and Service Inventory Catalog. SIKA-E is looking forward to hearing from USAID and SIKE Lead government institution MRRD.

SIKA-E team is working on preparing the district and provincial profiles to make the bases for effective and efficient contextual information before engaging the district and using the profiles as our reference tool while planning for all IRs and communication.

PMP Development –

Monitoring and Evaluation team recruitment was in place for the month of January. Two M&E officers recruited. The M&E director arrived to country on 6th January. PMP is in the final stages of work with great inputs from Bea Caventon and SIKA-E in country and home office team. The final PMP is going to be ready to be submitted in February 2012.

Gender –

Gender for SIKA-E is one of the important aspects of the program. SIKA-E is engaging key stakeholders at the national level including MRRD and USAID to explore ways how SIKA-E can incorporate gender

in both work force and project direct or indirect beneficiaries. SIKA-E organized a series of meetings and working more on the gender policy for the program.

DSF Process -

SIKA-E continues to modify and develop DSF into a culturally appropriate tool for use by Afghans. SIKA-E held a workshop on 28th January 2012 of key stakeholders with majority of Afghans at the table including MRRD, ASI and USAID colleagues. The DSF brainstorming session deliberately included people from a variety of backgrounds including senior MRRD advisors Ghulam Haider and Najia Kharoti, NABDP representative Mohammad Ajmal, ASI, and other community based programs, and a few trained stability specialists. Participants had varying degrees of familiarity with DSF; some had not heard of it at all. We explained that the premise of the session was not to teach DSF but to go through the core concepts and examine their applicability at the district level, with the goal of producing a form of DSF that will resonate with district entities (DEs). Ultimately we will use this feedback to prepare a curriculum for conducting DFS stabilization workshops at the district level.

Overall we met our intended goal of clarifying the definition of stability from the Afghan point of view. The discussion on instability criteria was inconclusive though most participants thought the three standard DSF instability criteria were acceptable. We need to continue to engage Afghans on an acceptable system of analysis for sources of instability at the district level.

GIROA COORDINATION:

MRRD and SIKA-East –

SIKA-E team met with MRRD SIKA Chief Coordinator Haydar Ghulam and USAID COTRs Jodi Rosenstein and Mike McParland on 18th January 2012 to go over the presentation for the MRRD Minister and Deputy Minister. During the meeting SIKA unit within MRRD was also further discussed.

SIKA-E team met HE MRRD Minister Jarullah Mansori with MRRD key priority program leads and USAID SIKA-E COTR Jodi and Mike on January 22, 2012.

Key points to emerge during meeting were:

Minister spoke last. He saw SIKA as more oriented toward development than to stabilization and was looking at the possible gains in employment and poverty reduction versus USAID focus on moving districts toward transition.

Speaking to our capacity building efforts, he noted that MRRD overall capacity was good compared to other ministries. However, he acknowledged that capacity at lower levels was lacking especially in some of the more remote provinces like Paktika. He also agreed with the view that GIROA legitimacy was tied to improving performance at the district level.

Picking up points made by other MRRD officials, he noted we weren't starting from scratch. He emphasized that MRRD had to have a lead role in SIKA and spoke of a draft currently before the Cabinet, developed by MRRD at the behest of Karzai, which would transform CDCs into Community Councils and DDAs into District Councils. These bodies were in Mansoori's view likely to become the face of local government in the near future. In line with this, the Minister stated that these were the only governmental DEs with which we would need to work.

Mansoori placed strong emphasis on the relationship between stability and sustainable community development projects, with comments made on how “quick impact” projects have had less impact on stability as they are often unsustainable.

SIKA OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT:

January 2012 was the last month SIKA-E targeted to stay in its temporary Ti Building. SIKA-E team started moving to SIKA-E new office from 28th January 2012 onward.

During the month of January, AECOM hired (49) CCNs to be based in the SIKA-East Kabul office, with (30) others in the process of being hired

FINANCE

Month	Total Obligated Amount	Amount Billed	Remaining Amount of Obligated Funds
January-12	\$25,000,000	\$468,172	\$24,531,828